

# **PREVENTIVE CARE FOR YOUNG CHILDREN**

## **5-6 MONTHS**

### **Nutrition and feeding**

- ★ introduce solid food at 4-6 months if infant is ready, see growth & development below for signs of readiness
- ★ introduce one new food at a time, wait 3-5 days before trying another food
- ★ use infant cereals, plain strained meat, plain strained vegetables, & plain strained fruits to start
- ★ no egg white during first year
- ★ do not prop bottle or put to bed with bottle
- ★ no honey until after first birthday
- ★ use highchair
- ★ continue breast feeding or iron-fortified formula
- ★ give fluoride supplement only if advised by your doctor
- ★ no cows milk until after first birthday
- ★ introduce infant to cup at 6 mo. by serving 1 oz. of infant juice

### **Growth and development**

- ★ bangs and shakes things
- ★ rolls over
- ★ sits (with no head lag)
- ★ bites on objects
- ★ watches faces
- ★ turns to sound
- ★ plays with feet
- ★ begins to feed self

### **Growth and development continued**

- ★ rakes in small objects
- ★ ready for solid food when: holds neck steady, opens mouth when food is offered, draws in lower lip when spoon is removed from mouth, keeps food in mouth & swallows it, & reach for food showing they want some

### **Safety and injury prevention**

- ★ safety-proof home; no exposed cords; medicines, bleaches, detergents, gasoline out of reach
- ★ avoid sharp-edged objects or easily broken toys
- ★ secure car seat in back seat, is everybody using seat belts?
- ★ keep plastic bags, balloons, marbles away
- ★ keep away from dog or cat when animal is eating
- ★ keep hot drinks away from infant
- ★ limit sun exposure/use sun screen
- ★ recognize early signs of illness
- ★ empty buckets, pool, etc. immediately after use
- ★ keep Ipecac in home; know Poison Control number 1-800-Poison-1 (1-800-764-7661)
- ★ do not give peanuts, popcorn, hot dogs, celery or carrot sticks, whole grapes, or raisins until age 3-4 years
- ★ keep environment smoke-free
- ★ use smoke alarms

(5-6 months, continued)

### **Babies enjoy**

- ★ rattles
- ★ spoons or teethingers
- ★ soft cuddly toys; squeaky toys
- ★ large areas to move around
- ★ measuring spoons, wooden spoons
- ★ wax paper

### **Health teachings**

- ★ play with infant
- ★ be consistent
- ★ be predictable
- ★ provide opportunities for exploration
- ★ establish a bedtime routine
- ★ have infant sleep in own bed
- ★ continue teaching consoling techniques, give transitional object, e.g., favorite toy/blanket
- ★ encourage infant to learn to console herself after putting her to bed awake
- ★ avoid over-the-counter drug without doctor's advice
- ★ do not smoke around children
- ★ learn CPR and first aid
- ★ wash adult's and infant's hands after changing diapers

**REMEMBER: Everyone wash hands  
(Adults and Children)**

### **Family issues**

- ★ parents need to take individual time and time with each other
- ★ need to maintain a social life - avoid isolation
- ★ continue to meet the needs of other children in family
- ★ issues, conflicts for working caregiver
- ★ violence potential; handle anger appropriately
- ★ watch for neglect or abuse
- ★ may need extra support, e.g., divorce, disability, income issues, grief, transportation
- ★ may need additional child care services

### **Questions? Contact:**

- ✎ Local Community Health Services Office
- ✎ Local Family Resource List
- ✎ Head Start
- ✎ Resources for Family - Provider Information Line 1-800-529-5000
- ✎ SD Department of Health 1-800-738-2301
- ✎ Health Care Provider